

# NEW

## Immunization Requirements for Alaska Schools and Childcare Facilities Effective 2001-2002 School Year



| Requirements <sup>1</sup>           | Vaccine-Preventable Disease | Facility Type |                    |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
|                                     |                             | School        | Childcare Facility |
| Existing                            | Diphtheria                  | ✓             | ✓                  |
|                                     | Tetanus                     | ✓             | ✓                  |
|                                     | Pertussis                   | ✓             | ✓                  |
|                                     | Polio                       | ✓             | ✓                  |
|                                     | Measles                     | ✓             | ✓                  |
|                                     | Rubella                     | ✓             | ✓                  |
| Additional<br><i>(new for 2001)</i> | Mumps <sup>2</sup>          | ✓             | ✓                  |
|                                     | Hepatitis A                 | ✓             | ✓                  |
|                                     | Hepatitis B                 | ✓             | ✓                  |
|                                     | Hib <sup>3</sup>            |               | ✓                  |
|                                     | Varicella <sup>4</sup>      |               | ✓                  |

### What are the requirements?

- All children in Alaska schools and childcare facilities have been required to be immunized against certain diseases since the 1970s.
- The new regulations require immunization against additional diseases.

### Who will be affected?

- All students in preschool and K-12<sup>th</sup> grade in both public and private schools *and* all children attending a licensed childcare facility.

### When will this be enforced?

- Enforcement for both schools and childcare facilities will begin at the start of the local school district's 2001-2002 year (in the fall of 2001).

### Why are these changes being made?

- Immunization is important to provide all Alaska children with protection against the potentially devastating effects of these diseases:

### Will my child have to get more shots?

- Maybe not. Many Alaska children already have received some or all of these immunizations because they have been recommended for years.
- Varicella (*chickenpox*) - If a parent reports his/her child has already had chickenpox, varicella vaccine will not be needed. Only children who have never been vaccinated against chickenpox or never had the disease will need this shot.
- Diseases other than chickenpox - A child will need the required shots or must have *laboratory-confirmed* immunity against the specific disease.

### What if I can't afford the vaccines?

- All recommended vaccines are provided for Alaska children at no cost.
- Public health centers and some special immunization clinics provide vaccines totally free of charge.
- Some private providers may charge a small fee to cover the cost of giving the shot. Call your healthcare provider to ask his/her policy.

### What should I do now?

- **START NOW!** Don't wait until the last minute!
- Check with your healthcare provider **NOW** to be sure your child has all his or her immunizations. Hepatitis A and B vaccinations require a series of shots that take at least 6 months to complete.
- Give your school or childcare facility a complete immunization record for your child.

<sup>1</sup> Exemptions may be granted for medical or religious reasons.

<sup>2</sup> Almost all Alaska children already have received mumps vaccine because it is a component of "MMR" (measles/mumps/rubella) vaccine.

<sup>3</sup> Hib = *Haemophilus influenzae* type b

<sup>4</sup> Varicella = "chickenpox"



Where can I get more information?

✓ **Talk with your  
healthcare provider or  
local public health center**

✓ **Call the Alaska  
Immunization Hotline**  
**(Toll-free)**  
**1-888-430-4321**  
**(in Anchorage)**  
**269-8088**

✓ **Check this website:**  
**[www.epi.hss.state.ak.us](http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us)**

Click on this picture →  
for more information



**Don't Wait! Vaccinate!**

## Hepatitis A

- A serious liver disease spread from person to person or sometimes by eating food or drinking water contaminated with hepatitis A virus.
- Hepatitis A infection can cause:
  - ▶ mild "flu-like" illness
  - ▶ jaundice (yellow skin and eyes)
  - ▶ severe stomach pains and diarrhea.
- Large hepatitis A outbreaks happen in Alaska every 7-10 years. Children under 15 years of age are most often affected.
- Hepatitis A outbreaks have caused over 3,000 cases and at least 4 deaths in Alaska in the past 10 years.

## Hepatitis B

- A serious liver disease spread through contact with the blood or body fluids of a person infected with the virus.
- Short-term (*acute*) illness leads to:
  - ▶ loss of appetite
  - ▶ tiredness
  - ▶ vomiting and diarrhea
  - ▶ jaundice (yellow skin or eyes)
  - ▶ pain in muscles, joints, and stomach.
- Long-term (*chronic*) infection:
  - develops in about 10% of infected persons. (The chance of this increases the younger a person is when infected.)
  - can lead to:
    - ▶ cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver
    - ▶ liver failure
    - ▶ liver cancer
    - ▶ death.

## Hib disease (*Haemophilus influenzae* type b)

- A serious illness spread from person to person, often by persons who don't know they carry the bacteria.
- Hib disease may cause:
  - ▶ bacterial meningitis (*inflammation of the brain*)
  - ▶ pneumonia
  - ▶ severe swelling in the throat
  - ▶ blood, joint, bone and heart infections
  - ▶ death.
- Before the vaccine was available, Hib:
  - was the leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children under 5 years of age;
  - caused about 2 deaths per year in Alaska.

## Varicella (*chickenpox*)

- A common childhood disease easily spread from person to person and through airborne droplets.
- Usually mild, but can be serious, especially in young infants and adults. Can lead to:
  - ▶ rash and itching
  - ▶ severe skin infection and scars
  - ▶ pneumonia
  - ▶ brain damage
  - ▶ death.
- Each year varicella causes about 12,000 hospitalizations and 100 deaths in the U.S. In 1997, an Alaska child died from chickenpox complications.

## Mumps

- A viral disease spread by airborne droplets or direct contact with an infected person's saliva.
- Illness can lead to:
  - ▶ fever
  - ▶ swelling/ tenderness of salivary glands
  - ▶ meningitis (*inflammation of the brain*)
  - ▶ inflammation of testicles or ovaries
  - ▶ deafness
  - ▶ death.